REMARKS

Status of this application

In the Office Action mailed on February 23, 2003, claims 1 and 12 (and their dependent claims 2-7 and 13-18 respectively) were rejected as being indefinite due to an insufficient antecedent basis for some of the terms.

Claims 1-5 and 8-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Meltzer et al. Patent 6,542,912 (hereinafter "Meltzer"). Claims 6-7 and 17-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Meltzer in view of Walker et al. Patent 6,041,308 (hereinafter "Walker").

The Office Action Summary indicated that the Action was "Responsive to the communication filed on 31 May 2000" (the application as filed) but does not acknowledge receipt and entry of the Preliminary Amendment which applicants filed for this application on April 10, 2003. In the event that Preliminary Amendment was not received and entered, the Examiner is requested to call applicants' undersigned attorney at (508) 778-2630.

This response amends the three independent claims 1, 8 and 12 to correct the points of indefiniteness noted by the Examiner and to more clearly distinguish applicants' invention from the system described in Meltzer. This response requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejection based on the prior art for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants' Invention

The present invention provide methods and apparatus that permit executing application programs to obtain and process information obtained via the Internet from identified remote resources. A service interface program accepts a service request identifying a particular resource from an executing application program. A service interface program is then executed in response to each such service request to obtain the particular service description corresponding to the identified resource from a services registry. The interface program then transmits an output information request to the address specified in the fetched service description, supplies input information from the executing application program in a format meeting the specification contained in said particular service description to the resource, and returns output information provided by the resource to the requesting application program.

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The Meltzer system for executing commercial transactions also uses a database which stores service descriptions that specify the nature of the input and output information handled by a service by defining XML input and output documents. When an incoming XML document is parsed by the service provider and its document type is identified, the document type is used by the service provider to identify and invoke a transaction process for translating the incoming XML document into suitable form for transaction processing, performs the processing associated with that document type, and then translates the processing results into an XML response document that is returned to the sender. The Meltzer system uses the service description information stored in the database to publish the manner in which the service provider performs transaction processing in response to defined input XML documents to yield defined XML output documents. Meltzer also uses the service descriptions to create the translation programs needed to process an incoming XML document (see Fig. 9).

Meltzer's system is not used to dynamically respond to a request from an executing application program by consulting a service description database to determine the nature of the input information needed, translate that information into the format specified by the service description, transmit the input information to an Internet address specified in the service description, and then return the output information returned by the service provider to the requesting executing application program.

Unlike applicants' invention as claimed, Meltzer does not provide an application program interface whose services may be invoked by an executing application program in order to trigger a service description lookup operation to determine how the application program's service request should be handled. In the Meltzer system, services are requested by transmitting an input XML document to the service provider which invokes transaction processing by determining the type of document received. Meltzer does not respond to a service request from an application program by performing a service description lookup operation and then processing the application program's request in accordance with the service description.

In rejecting claims 1 and 12, the Examiner cited column 19, lines 16-40 as being a teaching of a mechanism for issuing a service request and then executing a service interface program in response to the request. However, the cited passage of Meltzer describes the mechanism shown in Fig. 9 in which Meltzer's "BIC Builder" facility is used to accept information from a participant which defines a service in a standard way that may be used to set

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up the host processing facilities and that is then published. The mechanism described in Fig. 9 the cited passage does perform service description lookups in order to handle service requests.
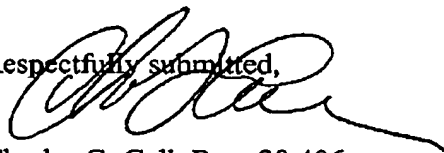
The Examiner further cites Meltzer at column 24, line 56 to column 25, line 5 for a teaching of transmitting an information request specified in a service description. This cited passage explains the manner in which a host service provider processes an incoming input XML document by parsing it, translating its content into a form suitable for processing, and then routing that data to a transaction routine which is determined by the document type of the input XML document. There is no suggestion anywhere in this passage that an interface routine is used to dynamically determine the Internet address to which a request is sent from a service description in response to a request from an executing application program as claimed. The Examiner further relied upon this passage in the rejection of claim 8 as being a teaching of retrieving a service description for a specified resource from the database. As noted above, this passage is concerned solely with the routing of an incoming XML document to a particular handling routing based on its document type, an operation which does not include consulting the service description database.

Independent claims 1, 8 and 12 have been amended to more clearly define and particularly set forth the novel features of applicants' invention. As amended, claims 1, 8 and 12 are believed to even more clearly distinguish applicants' invention from Meltzer and all claims are accordingly believed to be allowable.

With respect to the rejection for obviousness, it is submitted that there is nothing in either Meltzer or Walker that would suggest that a service description might advantageously include test input signal values and result values which should be created by a correctly functioning invoked service, or that the service description might advantageously include security information to ensure that an service request originates from an authorized source. Since there is no suggestion in either reference of the subject matter of claims 6-7 and 17-18, it is believed that the rejection based on the combination of these references is improper and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-18 as amended is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: June 23, 2004   Charles G. Call, Reg. 20,406

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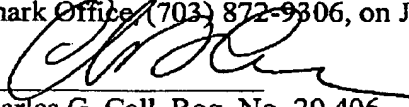## Certificate of Transmission under 37 CFR 1.8

I hereby certify that this *Amendment* is being transmitted by facsimile to the central facsimile number of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (703) 872-9306, on June 23, 2004.

Dated: June, 23 2004   Signature _____

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